

Argentina - Human Rights

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The human rights situation in Argentina remains grim: Leftist terrorism, a sort of blind, anarchic variety, continues although at a reduced pace. Even so, President Videla's aircraft was almost blown up upon takeoff this year, and Foreign Minister Guzzetti very narrowly survived an assassination attempt. The Argentine government, for its part, refuses to acknowledge the names of thousands of political detainees. Disappearances, prolonged period of incommunication, intimidation of lawyers and journalists, and the harassment of foreign refugees are undeniable. While conditions have improved somewhat in certain prisons with the initiation of Red Cross inspections, torture continues to be used and goes unpunished.

We have been signalling our concern over human rights clearly and repeatedly for over a year. In December we successfully induced the Government to withdraw a \$30 million loan for industrial credits in the IDB. In February we curtailed military assistance credits. In March we voted for a \$105 million highway project in the IBRD, but only after making a statement to the World Bank Board on human rights. Our IBRD action prompted an angry reaction from the Argentine delegate, who accused us of politicizing the IFIs. Recently, Treasury Secretary Blumenthal informed Argentine Economic Minister Martinez de Hoz that he would have trouble supporting upcoming IFI loans in view of the human rights situation in Argentina and asked that those not clearly meeting the needy criteria be postponed. This message was reinforced by Mr. Brezinski in a separate meeting with Martinez on June 4.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

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